(d) Part of Karnataka received less rainfall during current South-West monsoon period resulting in drought like situation. In response to the Memorandum submitted by the State Government seeking Central assistance in the wake of drought, an Inter-ministerial Central Team visited the affected areas from 31st July to 3rd August, 2001 for assessment of the situation. Entire Central share of Calamity Relief Fund for 2001-2002 amounting to Rs. 58.72 crore has been released to the State.

Facilities to food processing sector in A.P.

3525. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have extended loan and other facilities to food processing sector in Andhra Pradesh, so as to enable the sector to manufacture higher value-added products, with lesser investment; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TH. CHAOBA SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Financial assistance of around Rs. 674.00 lakhs was provided to different projects received from Andhra Pradesh for the development of food processing industries during the Ninth Plan period.

Demand for bio-fertilizers

†3526. SHRI GOPALSINH G. SOLANKI:
SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSHAKER DAVE:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether bio-fertilizers in the country are more in demand in the agricultural sector, than the chemical fertilizers;

(b) whether the present fertilizer producing units are unable to meet the demand for bio-fertilizers;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) what steps have been taken to ensure easy supply of fertilizers to farmers at low price?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) The installed annual production capacity is 18,500 tons of bio-fertilizer in the country. At present production is estimated at 10,000 tons per year and adequately meets the demand. The bio-fertilizers are low cost products and the Government provides capital investment subsidy for setting up of bio-fertilizer production units.

Pace of agriculture research

†3527. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are contemplating to accelerate the pace of research in agricultural field;

(b) if so, the details thereof and by when it is likely to be implemented; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government has planned to accelerate the pace of research,

(i) for increase in foodgrains production including the production of edible oils,

(ii) for development and promotion of location specific technologies in agriculture,

(iii) for sustainable use of natural resources used in agriculture,

(iv) in Bio-technology, a frontier area of research in agriculture, and

(v) to meet the requirement of milk, meat, egg and fibre through appropriate technologies.

Huge funds are required for achieving the above objectives. The Ministry of Agriculture has requested the concerned Department for allocation of funds at least at the rate of one per cent of Agril. GDP. The objectives will be achieved once the funds are made available for research.

(c) Not applicable.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.